

OFFICE OF
OUTREACH, DIVERSITY, AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
COOPERATIVE RESOLUTION PROGRAM

*"Bullying: What It Is and
How To Deal With It"*

Jeff Schmitt
Alternative Dispute Resolution Specialist

National Advisory Council for Office Professionals
November 13-14, 2013
Leesburg, VA

GOALS



- Increase our awareness/knowledge
- How to 'Bullyproof' ourself
- Discuss approaches to address bullying

BULLYING vs. HARASSMENT

Bullying: Repeated and unwanted actions by an individual or group with the express intent to intimidate, degrade or offend. Psychological violence.

Harassment: Unwelcome conduct that is based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, and/or age which may become severe or pervasive enough to create a hostile work environment.

LAWS

Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964

Prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin and age

Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) of 1967

ADEA protects individuals who are 40-years-old or older

Title I & Title V of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Protects qualified individuals with disabilities from discrimination based on their disability

Sections 501 & 505 of the Rehabilitation Act

Prohibits employment discrimination against Federal sector employees and allows attorney fees

WHAT IS A BULLY ?

Chronic – started in childhood and is motivated by the failure to confront their deepest feelings of personal inadequacies

Opportunistic - placed in a situation that justifies the need for more control

Accidental - people are unaware and if you address them about the behavior they will stop

TYPES OF BULLYING

CORPORATE – the act of imposing unmanageable working conditions and actively discriminating against employees who fail to comply

CLIENT – where customers behave in an abusive, angry and sometimes violent manner toward staff who are trying to assist them

SERIAL – when one employee actively abuses one colleague after another

TYPES OF BULLYING

PAIR/GROUP – where two or more people bully a victim; one bully usually takes the lead, while the other watches or aids in the abusive activities

REGULATION – where one colleague forces another to comply to unrelated or obscure workplace regulations, or makes unqualified formal complaints about the victim's personal behavior

CYBER – where abuse takes place via electronic forms of communication such as e-mail or internet

ISSUES THAT MAY FOSTER BULLYING

- **Competition**
- **Cultural differences/expectations**
- **Defaulting to assumptions**
- **Lack of accountability**
- **Stereotypes**
- **Increased awareness and availability of technology**

BULLYING TACTICS

- **Falsely accused of mistakes (42%)**
- **Ignored (39%)**
- **Used different standards or policies toward me than other workers (36%)**
- **Constantly criticized (33%)**
- **Someone didn't perform certain duties, which hurt my work (31%)**
- **Yelled at by boss in front of coworkers (28%)**



BULLYING TACTICS (cont.)

- **Belittling comments were made about my work during meetings (24%)**
- **Gossiped about (26%)**
- **Someone stole credit for my work (19%)**
- **Purposely excluded from projects or meetings (18%)**
- **Picked on for personal attributes (15%)**

Workplace Bullying on the Rise, According to New Study, Debra Auerbach, CareerBuilder Writer, 18 September 2012

WHAT IS *NOT* BULLYING BEHAVIOR

- Reasonable action taken in a reasonable manner by an employer to transfer, demote, discipline, counsel, retrench or dismiss an employee;
- A decision by an employer, based on reasonable grounds, not to award or provide a promotion, transfer, or benefit in connection with an employee's employment;
- Reasonable administrative action taken in a reasonable manner by an employer in connection with an employee's employment; or
- Reasonable action taken in a reasonable manner under an Act affecting an employee.

Section 55A (2), ***Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986***

RELATIONSHIP

BULLY (Controller)

- Desperate to dominate
- Ignorant of their deficiencies
- Have no interest in being in a relationship with a Target

TARGET (Cooperator)

- Operate in a world full of examples of cooperation
- Prize equity and justice
- Rewards are proportional to talent

HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING

- Severe anxiety (94%)
- Sleep disruption (84%)
- Loss of concentration (82%)
- Feeling edgy, easily startled (80%)
- Obsession over Bully's motives and tactics (76%)
- Stress headaches (64%)

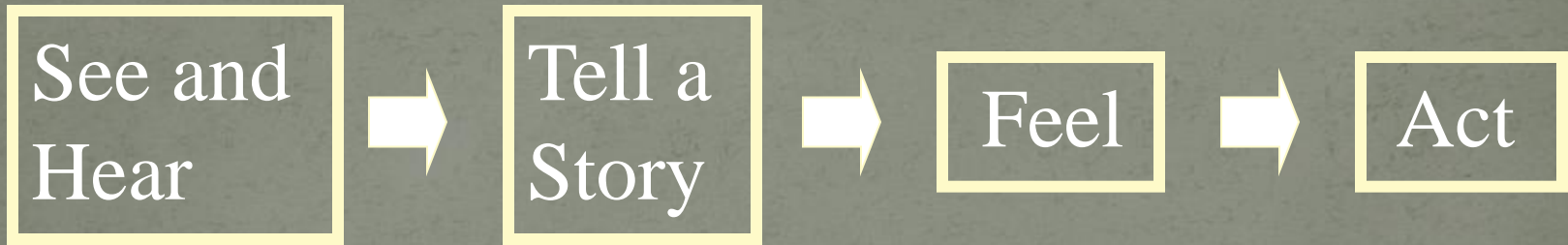
HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING (cont.)

- Avoidance of feelings, places (49%)
- Shame or embarrassment that changed lifestyle routines (49%)
- Racing heart rate (48%)
- Recurrent memories (46%)
- New body aches – muscles or joints (43%)
- Diagnosed depression (41%)

TARGET'S REACTIONS

- Simple denial
- Minimizing
- Rationalizing
- Intellectualizing





*“Do not wait for leaders;
do it alone,
person-to-person”*

- Mother Teresa

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **Regain Control
(Bullyproofing)**
- **Plan for Action**
- **Take Action**
- **Get Help**

BULLYPROOFING

1) RE-ESTABLISHING SELF-CONFIDENCE

Assess the bully's impact

- **How I relate to others**
- **How my coworkers see me**
- **My performance at work**
- **My ability to reason and solve problems**

BULLYPROOFING(cont.)

2) Establish and protect your boundaries

- **Work/Social**
- **Family**
- **Self**

3) Be wary of setting the bar too high for yourself

4) Counter your inner critic



HOW TO HELP A TARGET



- Listen without judging or evaluating
- Confirm or validate the Target's reality
- Show empathy
- Share personal experiences
- Help to educate

PLAN FOR ACTION

UNDERSTANDING YOUR BASIC NEEDS

- **Physical – clean air and water, clothing shelter**
- **Emotional – to feel respected, to love and be loved, sympathy and compassion for others**
- **Intellectual – information, stimulation**
- **Social – interaction, to be yourself, to feel like you belong to a group**
- **Workplace – resources to do the job, accomplish tasks free from interference**
- **Spiritual/Moral/Ethical - to seek meaning and value in your life**

PLAN FOR ACTION

DIFFICULTIES I HAVE IN REQUESTING MY NEEDS

- I have trouble asking for _____
- I have trouble asking for what I want from _____
- I have trouble asking for what I want when _____



TAKING ACTION

Keep a record

Write down all bullying incidents, documenting places, times, what happened and who was present. If witnesses were present, you may want to seek their input. You may also wish to keep a written record of your feelings as events transpire to serve as a release for your emotions.



“You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face... You must do the thing you think you cannot do.”

- Eleanor Roosevelt

ADDRESSING A 'CHARGING BULLY'

Failsafe Response - Interrupt him/her and then walk away

Examples:

- "Will you excuse me? I'm going to get a drink of water .
- "I'm headed out to lunch, but can we talk later?"
- "I want to hear you out , but first I need to finish something."

ADDRESSING A 'CHARGING BULLY'

Aggressive Failsafe Response - Interview an agitated bully until you've reached his underlying motivation. Ask 'why' in different ways.

Examples:

- Bully: "You haven't been listening to me."
You: "And how did you come to the conclusion that I wasn't listening to you?"
- Other examples: "Please help me understand what you are trying to say."; "And why is that?"; "Why do you believe that?"; "How come?"; "What's underlying that?"

PRIMARY RESPONSES TO BULLYING

- **Interrupting**
- **Questioning**
- **Paraphrasing**
- **Resolving the issue**
- **Humorous responses**
- **Avoiding mistakes**

TAKING ACTION

Interrupting

- Bullies count on politeness in others
- Say his/her name, look him right in the eyes
- Speak clearly in a strong, steady voice
- If he continues , repeat his name with the exact same tone and voice
- You can use several phrases to interrupt a bully, but they are more effective with a name.
"Hold on, (bully's name). Take a breath"
- When the bully stops talking, you can take control of the conversation by asking a brief question

TAKING ACTION

Asking Questions

- The goal is to continue to ask questions until he clearly explains himself
- At some point you may reach the bottom of his/her attack. You can then respond with a clear statement, "Now I see why you are concerned. I'll be more careful in the future."
- He may run out of patience and end the conversation early. You can then offer another time to work things out.

TAKING ACTION

Paraphrasing

- The act of putting the bully's actions into your own words and then having the bully confirm your interpretation.

Preface paraphrasing with: "Let me make sure I understand you." or "Let me be sure I heard you right."

Then follow with: "Are you saying...."; "So you feel that I'm...."; "Why do you think.."

After paraphrasing you can ask: "Is that what you mean?"; "Do I understand you correctly?"

TAKING ACTION

Resolve the issue

- Start by asking for his/her cooperation
“Can we try and figure out a way to resolve this?”
- Provide facts and how you interpret them
- Ask for any additional facts and his/her interpretation of all facts
- Ask him/her for a resolution
- Begin to work back and forth to come to an agreement
- Obtain his/her agreement on specific actions that you will both take

TAKING ACTION

Humorous responses

- Determined by your personal style and the situation
- Never forget that no matter how lightly you treat the situation , a skilled bully is usually playing for keeps.
- Look for contradictions and absurdities in a bully's attacks or mannerisms. Mock his innuendo

Example: "So you're saying that I shouldn't ask _____ where he left a client's file because that might lead to my selling him company secrets?"

- Act amused. If he/she suggests that you can't follow simple directions. You reply: "Maybe you're right . Could you make them more complicated next time?"

TAKING ACTION

Things to avoid

- Don't be defensive
- Don't be timid
- Don't be fooled
- Don't stoop to his/her level



TAKING ACTION

Advanced techniques

- Absorb the bully's attack
- Use the force of his attack to subdue him
- Give a meaningful, controlled response
 - Summarize the situation and the options
- Effectively respond to objections and continued aggression
- Calmly disengage if you can't make progress

DEALING WITH SPECIFIC TYPES OF BULLIES

WHEN YOU FIND YOURSELF SLIPPING OUT OF DIALOGUE

ASK YOURSELF:

- What do I really want for myself ?
- What do I really want for others?
- What do I really want for the relationship?

GET HELP

- **Cooperative Resolution Program (providing ADR services for the REE Mission Area)**
Jan Lewis 301-504-1450
Jeff Schmitt 301-504-1352
- **HRD-Personnel And Labor Solutions (PALS)**
(formerly HRD-Employee Relations Branch)
301-504-1349
- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**
(refer to administrative assistants for a local contact number)

REFERENCES

The Bully at Work - What You Can Do to Stop the Hurt and Reclaim Your Dignity On The Job, 2003, Gary Namie and Ruth Namie

Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most. 1999. Bruce Patton and Sheila Horn.

Crucial Conversations – Tools for Talking When Stakes are High. 2002. Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan and Al Switzler

Crucial Confrontations – Tools for Resolving Broken Promises, Violated Expectations and Bad Behavior. 2005. Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan and Al Switzler

WEBSITES

www.bullyonline.org

www.kickbully.com

www.bullyinginstitute.org

www.vitalsmarts.com

www.workplaceviolence911.com/node/773

CONCLUDING POINTS

- Do not play their game
- Do not stoop to their level or allow them to push your buttons
- Do not let someone walk on you
- Keep interaction professional
- Find your voice (how the behavior makes you feel)
- Practice self-affirmation and self-assertiveness

QUESTIONS?